

REMARKS

Following entry of this response, the above-identified application will now contain claims 8-11 and 13, which have been allowed, as well as newly added claims 16-21. Claims 16-21 have been added to replace claims 1-5, 7 and 14 that have been cancelled. Newly added claims 16-21 have been drafted to better point out and claim applicant's invention as well as to better distinguish applicant's invention over the art of record.

Newly added claim 16 recites an apparatus for routing signals that includes a cross-point matrix that has a plurality of inputs and at least one first output and at least one other output. The cross-point matrix provides a unidirectional routing path between at least one input and at least one output. A plurality of input-only ports each receives a respective input signal for transmission to a corresponding one of a first subset of cross point matrix inputs. At least one output-only port receives an output signal from the first cross point matrix output. At least one bidirectional port has the capability of receiving an input signal or transmitting an output signal. At least one switching means switches the at least one bidirectional port between a respective one of a second sub-set of cross point matrix inputs and the at least one other cross point matrix output.

As written, claim 16, and the claims that depend therefrom patentably distinguish over both U.S. Patent No. 6,611,518 to Ngo et al. (hereinafter "Ngo et al.") and U.S. Patent No. 4,673,933 to Bauer (hereinafter "Bauer"), as well as the combination of these patents.

The Ngo et al. patent concerns an Asynchronous Transport Mode (ATM) network that makes use of a backplane and a multiplexer-crossbar arrangement to interconnect each of a plurality of devices to various devices in an ATM switch fabric. However, there is no disclosure or suggestion in the Ngo et al. patent of a router arrangement that has a plurality of non-switchable input-only ports, and at least one non-switchable output-only port as recited in claim 16.

The Bauer patent concerns a switch matrix connected to a plurality of input lines and output lines, permitting each to switch between an input and output line. In this way, the Bauer switch matrix can increase the ratio of inputs to outputs for a fixed number of lines. However, like Ngo et al., Bauer does not teach the desirability of providing a plurality of non-switchable input-only ports and at least one non-switchable output-only port. Rather, all the ports are switchable.

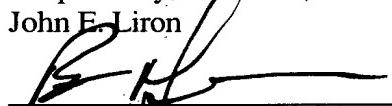
In view of the absence of any disclosure in either of the Ngo et al. and Bauer patents of non-switchable input-only ports and at least one non-switchable output-only port, the

combination of these patents would not render obvious applicant's newly submitted claim 16, nor claims 17-21 that depend therefrom.

In view of the foregoing remarks, applicants respectfully solicit allowance of the claims. If, however, the Examiner believes that such action cannot be taken, the examiner is invited to contact the applicant's attorney at (609) 734-6820 to arrange for a mutually convenient date and time for a telephonic interview.

No fee is believed due. However, if a fee is due, please charge the additional fee to  
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Respectfully submitted,  
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